

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Mongolism

It has long been recognized that the terms "mongolian idiocy", "mongolism", "mongoloid", etc., as applied to a specific type of mental deficiency have misleading connotations. The occurrence of this anomaly among Europeans and their descendants is not related to the segregation of genes derived from Asians; its appearance among members of Asian populations suggests such ambiguous designations as, "mongol Mongoloid"; and the increasing participation of Chinese and Japanese investigators in the study of the condition imposes on them the use of an embarrassing term. We urge, therefore, that the expressions which imply a racial aspect of the condition be no longer used.

Some of the signers of this letter are inclined to replace the term "mongolism" by such designations as "Langdon-Down anomaly", or "Down's syndrome or anomaly" or "congenital acromicria". Several other signers believe that this is an appropriate time to introduce the term "trisomy 21 anomaly" which would include cases of simple trisomy as well as translocations. It is hoped that agreement on a specific phrase will soon crystalize if once the term "mongolism" has been abandoned.

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